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UNTITLED STORY

by

Magda Herzberger

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Foreword

Dear readers of my poetry,
 I will relate to you the true story
 Of a bizarre incident
 Which happened to me --
 Although, it took place many years ago,
 It is still fresh in my memory --
 In my writing I convey,
 The dreadful event I experienced
 On a particular day,
 In the month of May --
 Please be attentive and receptive
 To my following poetic-narrative --
 I must mention
 And bring to your attention,
 That at the time
 This weird happening occurred,
 I was somewhat confused and perturbed,
 By being under the spell
 Of the strange creative spirits
 Which in my soul dwell --
 Therefore, I can't tell
 Whether my mysterious encounter
 Was real, supernatural or fictitious --
 I also have great difficulty
 In giving the right title
 To my mystical story --
 What should I call
 This fantastic occurrence
 Should I name it --
 Escape and deliverance?
 The face of reality?
 The tricks of destiny?
 Or, the price we pay for curiosity?
 I have to state

That up to date
I didn't cease to contemplate,
Which one of these titles listed above,
Would be most appropriate
To my odd tale --
But, I still fail
To reach any conclusion --
I can't overcome my indecision --
So, my dear readers,
Listen to my plea,
Study carefully
The text of my poetry,
And please find for me
The best title to my sinister story --

Untitled

It was a beautiful day
At the end of May --
I was strolling along the countryside,
Looking for a secluded quiet place
Where I could hide --
I was treading for hours
The earth's green face,
Watching the blooming flowers,
Listening to the twitter of the birds,
Perched on the tall trees,
Loaded with fresh new leaves,
And to the sound of the crickets
As they were hopping around,
On the grass-covered ground --
Colorful butterflies were flapping
Their dainty wings in the air,
With such ease and flair --
After awhile, I got tired of walking --
I was ready for settling somewhere
In a remote peaceful corner --
Eventually I came across
An isolated, solitary nook
Located near a gently flowing brook --
I decided not to go any further --
I sat down next to the clear water,
Looking up to the blue sky --

There were no traces of clouds passing by --
 I was enjoying the warm sun --
 All my previous anxieties and worries were gone --

Suddenly, I heard the sound of thunder --
 It was so strange,
 Because the weather didn't seem to change --
 I couldn't explain what was happening and why,
 As I was sitting under a cloudless sky --
 There were no evident indications
 Of any approaching storm or rain --
 But, the disquieting detonations
 And electrical explosions
 Came closer and closer
 To where I was resting --
 They were becoming more and more frightening,
 Annoying and distressing --

Then, my eyes fell
 On a reckless rider,
 Looking like a strange apparition
 Rising from hell,
 And heading into my direction,
 Disturbing the peace and serenity
 Of the beautiful season of spring --
 He was striking with his whip constantly,
 His fast galloping horse --
 The black stallion
 Followed his master's wild course,
 Without rebellion --

I felt outraged at the sight
 Of such cruelty,
 So, I called out loudly,
 Addressing the unruly and fiery jockey,
 Trying to reason and communicate
 With that rough faithless apostate --

"Slow down whoever you are!
 If you keep up like that
 You will not go too far!
 Why are you so dismal
 To your devoted loyal animal?
 Why do you force him
 To comply to your sickly whim?

Are you an awesome person
 Of a special kind?
 An aberration of some sort
 Of mankind?
 Please heed my advice,
 Be reasonable and wise,
 Ride more carefully
 And don't treat your black stallion,
 Your devoted companion, so badly --"

It seemed that the racing jockey
 Heard my plea,
 Because he slowed down gradually,
 Leading his horse steadily,
 In a continuous slow moving pace,
 Towards my resting place --
 Then ultimately,
 He stopped in front of me --

He wore a white mask on his face,
 His body was wrapped in a black sheet,
 I couldn't detect even his feet --
 He stood motionless and silent --
 At that point he didn't look mean or violent --

I couldn't control my curiosity,
 I wanted to find out who is he --
 So, I started talking to him
 Without interruption,
 Carried away by anger, dismay
 And compassion --

"Who are you, mysterious stranger?
 What force is impelling you
 To ignore kindness and danger?
 Where do you lead your dedicated steed
 With such force and speed?

With what kind of special poisonous potion
 Do you feed your valiant strong horse,
 To be so fast and fiery?
 Compelling him to follow willingly and blindly
 Your assigned treacherous course?

And what harmful bewitching mixture
Do you administer
To your faithful wild creature,
In order to alter
His true innate rebellious, defiant proud nature?
Rendering him submissive,
Compliant, patient and tolerant
To your crude insensitive treatment --

But, I can foresee
That some day
You will pay dearly
For your irresponsibility,
Inconsideration, carelessness and cruelty,
When your wild stallion
Will start his rebellion,
Against your torture and tyranny --
Then, he will defy your command
And he will not tolerate any more
Your torment and harsh treatment --
He will not cater to your desire --
When his patience and tolerance will expire,
He will release his repressed anger and rage
From their locked cage,
And he will set them on fire --
Then your obedient, abused, exploited slave
Will become again rebellious, defiant and brave --
He will brake his harness,
Fighting fiercely for his freedom and happiness --
He will throw you to the ground,
He will trample on you
And he will kick you around --
After his deed of revenge will be done,
He will jump and run,
Regaining his lost courage and pride,
And he will not mind, leaving you behind,
Bleeding to death by the wayside --
Therefore, if you don't want to die
To the rules of discipline you must comply --"

The weird jockey
Broke his silence finally
And began talking to me --

"I don't have patience for you anymore --

You are going to get
What you are not looking for --
I have something shocking for you in store --
I listened long enough
To your senseless, dull, lengthy monologue,
Now, it is your turn to pay attention
To my prologue --

I am the representative
Of sickness and decay --
You will curse incessantly the day
On which you met me --
I create terror, horror and fear
Wherever I appear --
I can open any door
And perform inside any place,
My ugly, awesome chore --
I can tease, torture and harass
Wherever I pass through
And meet defenseless, weak, insolent,
Arrogant and conceited people like you --
I can intimidate, humiliate
And subdue anyone --
Whenever I want to,
Deriving from it pleasure and fun --
I rejoice when I see someone
In great suffering and agony --
So, beware of me!
No one can anticipate
My sudden appearance
I am a threat to existence --

Nobody can prevent me
To carry out my true mission,
Consisting of life's execution --
I am someone you can't love but hate
I am the executive delegate of fate --
You will respect me,
When I reveal to you
My face and body,
And you will also realize
That accosting me was not wise --
You will see what a high price you will pay
For your uncontrolled curiosity --"

At that point the mysterious jockey
 Removed his mask from his face
 And the black sheet from his body --
 My heart almost stopped its beat,
 Because all I could see
 Was a bare skull, naked bones,
 And two black holes,
 In the place where the eyes are supposed to be --
 He was addressing me
 With a hoarse and coarse voice --

"To stop here was not my choice,
 By now I suppose you know my name
 And the purpose of my game --
 As you probably noticed,
 My voice is rough and deep --
 I am the vendor of eternal sleep,
 And the nightmare of everybody --
 No one can make fun of me --
 Listen mortal stranger,
 Beware of my revenge and anger --
 I have a violent temper --
 Be courteous, humble and polite,
 Otherwise, I might strike you
 With my invisible scythe,
 Bringing upon you the curse of blight --
 I always carry with me my useful tool --
 Nobody can take me for a fool --"

The ghastly specter,
 The vile demolisher,
 Seemed pleased and amused,
 To see me utterly astonished and confused,
 Trembling like a dying leaf,
 Stricken by fright and grief --
 He continued his threatening speech
 Without inhibition,
 With no intermission --

"Who do you think you are
 To allow yourself to go so far
 As to criticize, to judge or to analyze
 My conduct or action?
 You better apologize!
 Or, you are in for a big surprise!

I have a tendency to tantalize
 And to kill with my sharp device --
 My touch is as cold as ice --
 All over the world I roam,
 And everywhere I feel at home --
 I travel constantly
 From the North to the South Pole
 Fulfilling my sole mission and goal;
 The destruction of the body and soul --
 I am known to be heartless and evil,
 I am compared to the devil --"
 I was speechless and terrified,
 I felt helpless, terrorized and victimized
 By that undesirable predator,
 Whose intention seemed to be,
 To monitor my heartbeat
 And to put me
 To eternal sleep --
 I knew that I made a grave mistake,
 And due to that, my life was at stake --

I was asking desperately
 That ruthless manifestation of horror,
 That brutal molester,
 To forgive me,
 Addressing him with humility --

"Powerful Shadow,
 I stand in awe before you --
 What can I say or do,
 To make peace with you?
 Please, don't take me away,
 Don't use me as your prey --
 I am willing to repent,
 Be merciful and tolerant --"

But the gruesome apparition
 Had no favorable reaction
 To my fervent plea,
 He didn't show any sign of pity,
 On the contrary,
 He continued to threaten me
 Even more vehemently --

"I ignore your appeal!

You can't make with death
 Any special deal,
 Or, escape his wrath --
 I don't believe in mercy or concession,
 I have no compassion --
 I detest forgiveness and protection --
 I don't make any exception,
 Neither do I have tolerance
 For disrespect and arrogance --
 You will suffer for your offense --
 You deeply hurt my pride,
 And interrupted my ride --
 Therefore, I will not step aside --
 With you I will stay --
 You can't get away
 Without my severe punishment --
 You will not escape
 My harsh treatment --
 Now that I am here,
 It should be very clear,
 That you might have to come with me,
 Regardless to what degree
 You despise my company,
 And experience my adventurous,
 Perilous and foreboding journey --
 You became the victim
 Of your curiosity --"

I was begging despondently
 My loathsome persecutor,
 My abominable tormentor,
 For understanding and sympathy --

"Please don't take me along,
 It would be so wrong and unfair,
 Because I have to take care of my family --
 They will be brokenhearted and lost without me --
 Besides, I love my life
 And I would like to continue my strife --
 Regardless how difficult it may be --
 I want to be healthy, safe and sound
 Going happily around --
 I have lots of goals to fulfill,
 I am not ready yet
 To pay life's final bill --
 Therefore, please, allow me
 To jump over that nearby fence

And don't take my request as an offense,
 But merely like a self-defense,
 In order to get out of your way --
 I would like to stay
 On that other side,
 And behind those tall distant bushes
 I would like to hide,
 Giving you ample free place
 For your fast ride --"

Then, the horrid specter of oblivion
 Expressed his opinion --

"Courageous mortal is your name,
 You attained power and fame,
 Yet you tremble before me,
 Refusing my company --
 Although you act like a coward,
 You still deserve an award from me,
 Because I have to admit,
 That despite your character deficit,
 I must give you credit,
 For daring to stop and to affront death --
 So, I present to you
 My precious, concealed open casket
 Filled with foul expired human breath --"

The ruthless cruel specter
 Forced me to inhale
 The poisonous stale exhalations,
 Which gave me mortifying hallucinations --
 They were terrible visions
 Of myself being pushed
 Into death's empty coffin
 And taken for a dangerous ride,
 Then being buried alive --
 In my insane delusion
 And total confusion,
 I was kicking the tightly closed lid of the coffin
 And kept yelling --

"This can't be true!
 This can't be true!"

But, nobody was coming to my rescue,
 I was choking and suffocating --
 I felt that I was dying --

I started screaming and crying --

"A terrible injustice was done
I was proclaimed dead,
But, I am not really gone --
I want to come out and see the sun --"

After awhile I realized
That my lamentations
And my desperate cry
Were senseless and futile,
Because there was nobody around
Above the ground
Who could save me,
And not let me die --
I was hopeless and powerless
Locked in my solitary underground,
Where there was no movement, no sound --
There was no chance for salvation,
I knew that I was gradually approaching
Life's final station.
Feeling devastated and extremely weak --
My vision was blurred.
And I couldn't speak --
As I was fighting fiercely
For each breath
In my dark grave.
I could hear clearly
The powerful sinister voice of death,
Resounding in my sealed cave --

"Struggling mortal,
You will soon enter my black portal,
Heed my words:
I am the absolute ruler
Beneath the earth --
Your ultimate fate
Was planned at your birth --
No amount of awe and sorrow
Can change your destiny --
From now on forever
You belong to me --
Nobody can ever touch my acquired property --
Accept bravely your suffering and pain --
Your effort to survive is in vain --
You will eternally remain
In my cold, dreary and unfriendly domain --"

Then suddenly I came back to reality,
 In a state of agony and despair,
 I was still gasping for air --
 The cruel torturer was at my side
 Robbing totally my confidence and pride --
 He resumed his malicious sleek rhetoric
 Disregarding my suffering and panic --

"I can't stop laughing and rejoicing,
 While you are coughing and choking --
 But relax, don't despair,
 Soon you will get again fresh air --
 I will release you from my spell
 And you will get well,
 Because this time I leave you behind --
 Once in awhile
 I am merciful and kind --
 Besides, you are not listed yet in my file --
 But, I couldn't resist
 To show you the extent of my power
 By giving you a sample
 Of what it would be like
 The agonizing plight of your last hour --

But, it is such a shame
 That I can't stay any longer
 And play with you over and over
 My funny enjoyable game --
 It was amusing and pleasurable to witness
 Your physical and mental distress --
 I would derive lots of satisfaction
 Even from a single additional repetition
 Of my previous action --

But my time is up
 And I have to go on
 To my next stop,
 Looking forward to some more fun --
 I have an important appointment to keep,
 With someone, whom I must put to eternal sleep --
 But, remember mortal stranger,
 That someday I will be back,
 And then, your life will be in great danger,
 Because I will force you to ride with me,
 On the back of my fast galloping horse,
 Exposing your soul and body
 To my dangerous, bumpy and devious course --

I will have no sympathy or consideration,
For your emotional frustration and strain,
Nor for your discomfort and pain --

I also have in mind
To subject you in the future
To a special kind of torture,
By bringing upon you
A terrible affliction
Of a specific nature --
But, it will not be the outgrowth
Of phantasy and fiction --

There will be no more spells induced by me,
No tricks of imagination,
No illusionary visions and impressions --
You will suffer in silence intensely
In the world of reality --
You will not exert any resistance,
On the contrary,
You will beg for my assistance
Offering to give up voluntarily
Your cherished existence --
Then you will see
That I manifest occasionally
Understanding and mercy --
I will fulfill your desire
By helping you to expire --
You will experience
The painful and sorrowful sensation
Of your life's real and final cessation --"

Death put up again his camouflage,
Disguising his body and visage
And laughing heartily,
He finally left me,
Riding wildly as before,
And disappearing in the nearby forest --
But, I couldn't rest peacefully anymore,
Nor could I enjoy
The beauty of the outdoor --
I was agitated, frightened and uneasy --
Death planted into me
The seeds of horror, terror and insanity --
I was running home frantically,
And bolted behind me quickly
The front door --

Standing on the entrance hall's tiled floor,
 I listened intently,
 Still not feeling safe inside --
 Still troubled, shocked, confused and terrified,
 Thinking that maybe death followed me from behind --
 I was dazed, like in a trance
 Reflecting on my miraculous escape
 And my magical deliverance --

Suddenly I realized
 That my life is precious and dear,
 And it became very clear
 In my mind,
 That the best way to find
 Peace and serenity,
 And to overcome fear and anxiety,
 Was to pray to God everyday,
 Asking Almighty
 To keep death from me away --
 I broke into tears,
 Beseeching the Creator to grant me
 Many happy and healthy years --

Epilogue

Never insult death.
 Don't ever provoke his wrath,
 Because he can still your breath --
 If someday
 He happens to come your way,
 Don't accost him,
 But, let him pass freely through,
 Be happy and grateful
 That he didn't come for you --

Conclusion

Dear readers of my poetry,
 If someday something similar
 To my gory encounter
 Which I described in my story,
 Will happen to you,
 I hope you will know what to do --

